

**Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)  
scrutiny review**

**Community Safety Scrutiny Commission Report**

**May 2019**

## Summary

The council has made a commitment to develop a VAWG strategy by early summer 2019. This review aims to influence this important piece of work. The strategy will ensure the council are delivering a strategic partnership response to all areas of gender based violence.

The established work on Domestic Abuse will be integrated into the new strategy. As well as Domestic Abuse the VAWG will also tackle harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Honour Based Violence, as well as rape, sexual assault, harassment, stalking, coercive control, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), and image based sexual offending. Trafficking will also be addressed by the VAWG; and this aspect, alongside Modern Slavery, is addressed in another report by the Community Safety Scrutiny Commission

The review decided to particularly focus on girls, with an emphasis on prevention, protection and support, and working with our partners to improve effectiveness.

The commission considered data showing unacceptable rates of sexual harassment and assault of girls and women on the streets, in public places and in schools nationally, including primary schools. The council and police were asked to provide local data for rates of sexual assault and harassment in Southwark schools. This is not routinely collected and so cannot be analysed for trends or compared; however it does show that there is a small risk for all children, including primary school age. Nationally women's groups have been advocating for better and more consistent monitoring for sexual assault and harassment in schools and the commission recommends that more work is done locally by the council, police and schools to gather this. Age appropriate teaching about consent ought to happen in primary school.

Focus groups were held with girls and boys in two secondary schools and one youth club. They were asked about consent and harassment. The responses varied; some girls said that they felt safe on the streets, while others said they always walked home in pairs for protection and regularly encountered sexual harassment by older men and groups of boys, through unwelcome comments. There was not a consistent view on what was harassment or assault; however those girls who had done most work on addressing this in school and youth clubs were much more confident and robust in their responses. More work is needed to raise awareness of what constitutes harassment and the commission recommends a public awareness campaign. More work is also needed tackle the misuse use and abuse of images, particularly of girls by boys, in and out of school.

The commission decided to look at the teaching of healthy relationships. The government is bringing in a new requirement for primary schools to teach Relationship Education (RE) and for secondary schools to teach Relationship and Sex Education (RSE).

A questionnaire was held asking schools about their teaching and safeguarding practices, and how the council could assist in improving healthy relationships. Schools valued the current resources provided by the council – which includes networking events with PSHE leads, online resources to teach PSHE and specific issues, such as consent, and the commissioning of services, such as SHER- Safe Healthy Equal Relationships. They wanted more of this and the commission recommends developing specific RE and RSE resources, signposting to good quality providers and to consider commissioning these.

The young people in the focus groups gave very variable responses when asked about their relationship education in schools and youth clubs. Many said that they received little or no teaching on healthy relationships and that what they did receive focused on biology and information. Overwhelming young people wanted more on interpersonal skills and emotions delivered in small groups; by a mixture of councillors, youth workers and peers. Those young people who were confident had received this type of

teaching and the commission was particularly impressed by the work of Harris Girls. The commission recommends that the RE / RSE resources are particularly focused on the relationship side of sex education and seek input from young people in the development. More work also needs to be done to enable and support parents to fulfil their role in helping young people form and develop healthy relationships. There is already some excellent work going on in Southwark primary schools to help parents with social media, gender stereotypes and LGBTQI+, often with their children. The council ought to build on this.

Lastly the Commission looked at the Women Safety Charter (WSC), which was established in 2015 to keep women safe from harassment on a night out. This has been rolled out to hundreds of premises and the commission recommends that now is a good time to evaluate its impact and extend its use.

## **Recommendations The Council, police, schools and NHS should:**

1. Work towards a more integrated approach on prevention and promoting healthy relationships is needed. The council should lead the way in producing relevant and useful resources for primary and secondary, with primary schools encouraged to teach sex and health relationships in the final years, including consent.
2. Develop Southwark Relationship Education (RE) and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum resources, making sure that these emphasise developing relationship skills and emotional literacy, and are appropriate to the ethos of different schools, and the needs and ages of different children. These ought to be high quality, electronic, flexible resources with clearly defined permissions that schools can use to create their own lesson plans - with an emphasis on images and short videos. Input ought to be sought from young people (e.g. Southwark Young advisors) in their development to ensure that they reflect the concerns of today's young people.
3. Develop a resource list of quality external providers (SHER, Tender etc.) and consider commissioning these.
4. Schools ought to be encouraged and enabled to provide support to parents and carers to help their children to develop healthy relationships.
5. The Police and Southwark Council should work closely with schools, via the headteachers networks and other forums, in order to get a better picture of what is going on in schools and to share information. Agreement ought to be sought on how to consistently report data on sexual harassment and assault so this can be monitored for trends. The model safeguarding policy ought to be updated to enable this, alongside the provision of guidance and training, network events and inset days aimed at Maintained schools, Trusts, and Academies – as appropriate.
6. Run an awareness campaign on harassment, how to identify it, and how to address it. This should include a specific schools focused campaign with consistent messages and education on what constitutes sexual harassment and consent. One approach could be a week long campaign every year (in November to coincide with 14 days of action on VAWG).
7. Create specific guidelines and recommendations to address online abuse, in school and outside of school, and run a public awareness campaign of what is acceptable.
8. Conduct an impact assessment of the women's safety charter to understand how effective it has been.
9. Require signing up to the charter as a licencing condition.
10. Make it compulsory for all licensed premises to address sexual harassment by putting in place policies and training
11. Ensure the VAWG strategy includes tackling sexual harassment in public places.
12. A councillor ought to be appointed to lead on VAWG

## 1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. This is the final report of the review into Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), which principally aims to influence the VAWG strategy that is in development.
- 1.2. Southwark committed to developing a VAWG Strategy with the new incoming administration in May 2018, and this was adopted by the Council Plan. Scoping began in September 2018. The VAWG strategy will ensure we are delivering a strategic partnership response to all areas of gender based violence, not only domestic abuse. These include harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Honour Based Violence as well as sexual harassment and stalking. Domestic Abuse (DA) will still form a key part of this strategy with any remaining actions from the existing DA strategy subsumed into the new VAWG strategy. In line with the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) Strategy, the following areas of VAWG will be considered for inclusion within the strategy:
- Domestic abuse
  - Coercive control
  - Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
  - Harmful practices including female genital mutilation, forced marriage and honour based violence
  - Image based sexual offending
  - Sexual harassment
  - Prostitution
  - Misogyny
  - Sexual violence and rape
  - Stalking
  - Trafficking
  - Perpetrators
- 1.3. The review decided to particularly focus on prevention; protection and support; and building effective partnerships to improve services. The following two themes were chosen:
- Tackling sexual violence and harassment in schools and on our streets
  - Safeguarding young women and girls from violence, reduce victimisation, tackle peer on peer violence and prevent girls and young women from becoming associated and /or exploited by gangs.
- 1.4. With the above in mind the Commission decided conduct a survey and focus groups on safe and healthy relationships teaching in schools and youth clubs. There will be a new Department for Education (DfE) requirement for schools to teach Relationship Education ( primary) and Relationship & Sex Education ( secondary) starting 2020.
- 1.5. School safeguarding policies and council and police data collection on sexual harassment and assault in schools was examined to try and understand the local data and monitoring practices.
- 1.6. The Commission also reviewed Women's Safety Charter (WSC) which was established in 2015 to tackle harassment of women in Southwark at night time.

## 2. Evidence Considered & Methodology

### Methodology

2.1. During the first scrutiny meeting (29th October 2018) the Commission looked at VAWG across the board including plans for the new VAWG strategy. This included an update on work delivering the Women's Safety Charter and the consultation on the preventative strand of Southwark's sexual and reproductive health strategy, Healthy and Fulfilling Relationships. The Director of Education also attended to present on changes to the delivery of sex education and present practice around safeguarding in schools.

2.2. Following evidence presented during the initial meeting the Commission decided to focus the second scrutiny meeting ( 5 February 2019) on sexual violence and harassment in schools and healthy relationships . The second scrutiny meeting involved both external and internal stakeholders.

2.3. The third scrutiny meeting (29th April 2019) reviewed the evidence received from focus groups held on Safe and Healthy Relationships with young people and the results of a questionnaire with schools.

2.4. Research methods included:

- *Desktop research and literature review* - a full review of current local authority, regional and national VAWG and anti-slavery strategies.
- *Analysis of existing local data, action plans and strategies* - existing Southwark strategies and action plans on VAWG and slavery.
- *Focus groups with students and teachers*- 3 roundtable discussions with students (male and female), teachers at the City of London Academy (COLA) and Harris Girls School and with Salmon youth club attendees.
- *Online survey* - an online survey to seek the views of Southwark teachers on PHSE and safeguarding
- Interviews - with anti-slavery and VAWG experts
- Events/conferences - ECPAT conference and Southwark conference HYP Southwark stakeholder

### 2.5. Key stakeholders consulted

- Southwark Council – Children's and adults social care, Safer Communities Team Manager (presented on the new VAWG strategy), Licensing (presented work delivering the Women's Safety Charter), Director of Education (presented on changes to the delivery of sex education and safeguarding in schools), PSHE and Healthy Schools Advisor
  - NHS Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group- Public Health consultant, presented on the preventative strand of Southwark's sexual and reproductive health strategy; Healthy and Fulfilling Relationships; the Director of Quality & Chief Nurse report on her role chairing the presented multi agency VAWG Delivery Group.
  - Police (Detective Superintendent Sean Oxley – Safeguarding Lead for Central South and DI Paul Graves – Deputy in Safeguarding Hub for Central South)
  - Education providers (Roundtable discussions with the Salmon Centre, Harris Girls School and the City of London Academy (COLA))
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### 3. Healthy Relationships

3.1. The Commission chose to look at safe and healthy relationships teaching in schools and youth clubs as this seemed to be an opportunity to influence young people at a formative stage, young girls are at particular risk of violence and sexual harassment.

3.2 There is evidence showing the high rates of domestic abuse among young people<sup>1</sup>, national and local concerns about rising youth violence, and concerning data on the extent of sexual assault and harassment in both secondary and primary schools<sup>2</sup>.

3.3 Public Health is consulting on Southwark's sexual and reproductive health strategy; with a strand on Healthy and Fulfilling Relationships. Officers said that there are different cultural views on what constitutes a healthy relationship and it is important to acknowledge these differ.

3.4. Safeguarding practices were also considered to try and understand how effectively girls are protected and to look at data trends around levels of sexual harassment and assault. The commission discovered gaps in knowledge and understanding here partly due to an increasingly autonomous school system.

3.5 The majority of primary schools in Southwark are in the maintained sector, whereas the majority of secondary schools are academies or trusts. Academies are not under any obligation to deliver parts of the PSHE curriculum or engage with the local authority, although the majority will do both. This has been subject to much scrutiny as it leaves the schools with freedom to decide on what they need to teach, leading to a wide range of variability which was evidenced through the course of the review. However a number of academies did engage with the Commission and two in particular, COLA and Harris Girls, both shared their high levels of expertise and commitment to the teaching of Relationship and Sex Education.

3.6. The secondary school relationship with the council on safeguarding is also one more of influence, with many using the guide policy, and the requirement to report matters being restricted to reporting matters to the safeguarding hub MASH or police where there is a risk of harm or a criminal threshold has been reached.

3.7. In September 2020 new laws will come into effect requiring schools to teach Relationship Education (RE) in primary schools, and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) in secondary schools. There has been much controversy in the media regarding teaching about LGBTQ+ which will form part of the education curriculum. It is unclear if academies will be exempt from this requirement.

3.8. Southwark Council has a PSHE (Personal Social, Health and Economic) curriculum,<sup>3</sup> and an associated PSHE resources bank with content to support the teaching of to safe and healthy relationships,

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<sup>1</sup> Crime survey for England reported that young people experience the highest rates of domestic abuse out of any age.

<sup>2</sup> In 2016 the Women and Equalities Select Committee report into [Sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools](#) found the following:

- 59% of girls and young women aged 13–21 said in 2014 that they had faced some form of sexual harassment at school or college in the past year.<sup>11</sup>
- Almost a third (29%) of 16–18-year-old girls say they have experienced unwanted sexual touching at school.<sup>12</sup>
- 41% of UK girls aged 14 to 17 who reported an intimate relationship experienced some form of sexual violence from their partner.<sup>13</sup>
- 22% of young girls aged 7–12 have experienced jokes of a sexual nature from boys.<sup>14</sup>
- Nearly three-quarters (71%) of all 16–18-year-olds (boys and girls) say they hear sexual name-calling with terms such as "slut" or "slag" used towards girls at schools on a daily basis or a few times a week.<sup>15</sup>
- 28% of 16–18-year-olds say they have seen sexual pictures on mobile phones at school a few times a month or more

but this portal does not yet have a specific Relationship Education and Relationship and Sex Education curriculum. There are well attended network events on PSHE. Officers said Trusts and standalone schools are more likely to approach the local authority for resources; where as large academy chains may have in-house resources.

3.9. Here is a list of some the specific Southwark Council services aimed at young people:

**YUVA** - service for young people using or experiencing violence in close relationships

**SHER** - a safe and healthy relationships programme delivered in schools. This is a toolkit, developed together with Southwark Council and European Partners. Bede has been delivering SHER- Safe Healthy Equal Relationships since 2009, prior to that BEDE were delivering Teenage Domestic Violence Awareness in Southwark Schools.

**HYP Southwark** -is an integrated service for young people aged 10-25 years. Brook has partnered with CGL to create new integrated health and wellbeing services for young people in Lambeth and Southwark. These services will bring together the expertise from both organisations in delivering sexual health and substance misuse services for young people. Both services are currently phasing in new locations and services so please keep checking back for more info and updates.

#### **4. Where and what students are taught about sex and relationships varies wildly**

4.1. Based on the results of the questionnaire with schools it is clear that schools are teaching different curricula and using a wide variety of resources to teach PSHE, examples include: relationships and Sex Education format approved by the Catholic Education Commission; Southwark's framework; the PSHE Association; SHER Project; Health Education Partnership (HEP) framework ;a curriculum specifically designed to meet the needs of young people with autism and moderate or severe learning difficulties; bespoke PSHE curriculum and scheme of work, including RSE for all year groups and key themes around respectful relationships and safety, taught at an age-appropriate level; National PSHE curriculum.

4.2 70 % of teaching is in-house and 30% is done by external providers. External providers used include: SHER, Tender, Image in Action and independent health and well-being consultants.

In terms of how effective these educational resources varies for example teachers who responded the survey 30% thought they were neither effective nor ineffective, 10% thought they were not that effective, 50% thought they were quite effective and only 10% thought they were really effective.

Detailed responses included:

- We use a range of resources from various providers. We have an in-house specialist who updates resources every term and this specialist obtains feedback from students on the content of material used and assesses their understanding
- Staff training is an ongoing issue, to enable staff to be best able to deal with any issues raised during the programmes.
- The lessons are mainly taught around how we change and grow. Although we have a very strong ethos of respect, I think we could do more to promote healthy and safe relationships, appropriate to a primary school.

4.3 Schools indicated they value the PSHE resources, network meetings, workshops and drop down-days offered by the council. They want more resources, signing posting to high quality external providers (particularly free or subsidised ones) and for the council to consider commissioning / funding these. These need to take into account the ethos of different schools and the needs of the children, which include special needs. Schools also mentioned family / parent support programmes.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://schools.southwark.gov.uk/pshe-healthy-schools/pshe-sex-relationship-education-sre-wellbeing-2>



Teachers indicated that skills and confidence are needed to teach this subject well. Sometimes it is neglected as because is not considered academic and also because the subject matter can make teachers uncomfortable. There are also challenges in pitching in an age and culturally appropriate way. However the enthusiasm from subject pioneers who contributed to the review demonstrated that this is emerging as a priority for many schools.

## **5. What do young people think?**

### **5.1. *More emotions less biology***

Many young people said the teaching in school tends to be scientific and focused on the physical: how to have sex; puberty; some teaching on STDs. Other students spoke about PSHE classes and case studies, which had been useful.

The majority of young people could not identify with any depth of understanding what a healthy relationship was and many said they received little or no relationship education in school. Frequently young people said the current curriculum was perceived as largely informational.

Overwhelmingly young people said they would prefer more on skills and the emotional side of relationships. A young person who went on a study trip to Holland spoke highly of the Dutch focus on understanding relationships, with 6 year olds addressing what love is.

Often media has become a significant or main educator, alongside peers and family. Media portrayal of relationships was considered often unrealistic and unhelpful.

As well as developing their relationship literacy young people said that LBGTQ+ education needs to be improved and girls, in particular, wanted more information on how to protect themselves from infection and pregnancy .

## **6. What is working well?**

6.1. At Salmon youth club the young people were all very complimentary about the Salmon centre and confident that they could speak to youth leaders about concerns. They said the club is where they talked about relationships.

6.2. Harris Girls Academy students received a range of relationship and sex education. This included regular sessions in their coaching year group, school assemblies on themes like women's rights and specialist courses delivered by counsellors in the school's 'Health Hut'. Some students are invited to attend special courses on healthy relationships and have mentors. Overwhelmingly students spoke about school as the main source of a varied, rich, important, and trusted environment for learning about relationships. When asked to define a healthy relationship the young people were very confident and articulate and defined these as involving:

- Trust
- Respect
- Express your feelings
- Being assertive
- Setting and respecting appropriate boundaries

6.3. Students spoke about help and information provided about not having sex underage. Students spoke about what constitutes an unhealthy relationship and how to recognize abuse, toxic patterns, and red flags for someone who might later be abusive or unhealthy. Examples were given of role plays and scenarios that had been discussed and acted out: for example addressing intrusive and controlling requests to look at a phone or dealing with and identifying physical aggression like pushing. They spoke about the importance of consent for activities like kissing. SHER & Tender (an arts charity working with young people to prevent

domestic abuse and sexual violence by promoting healthy relationships based on equality and respect) were used and endorsed by the young people and teachers.

6.4 City of London Academy (COLA) recently identified relationship and sex education as a priority by student panels. The school is developing content through a cycle of continuous feedback and improvement. The review was impressed by the commitment shown by both the teaching lead and the young people who attended a scrutiny committee meeting.

## **7. Young people would prefer relationship centred teaching; in year groups and small groups, with a preference for support from counsellors, older peers, youth workers and external organisations**

Young people said they would benefit from more education about feelings and relationships rather than just teaching about biology. They wanted this to start in primary school.

Young people liked teaching that used role plays, scenarios and real life examples that they could discuss.

They wanted relationship education in year groups, small groups and workshops.

Young people said that counsellors could help with talking to young people and giving students the option of someone to confide in. There was a preference for youth workers or external professionals rather than their class teachers to deliver relationship and sex education.

## **8 Work with parents**

Schools and Commission members were keen that parents were engaged and empowered to play their part in teaching and promoting healthy relationships with their children. Not every family will have the skills and cultural background to confidently discuss the issues involved, some families will have troubled relationships, and there are new and challenging issues such as cyberbullying that parents may not have personal experience, so support is needed.

A member gave a good example of work in Tower Bridge Primary school. This school holds sessions to discuss a variety of topics, such as social media, LGBTQI+, gender stereotypes. Some sessions are for parents and carers, and others are mixed session with the children. Sessions sometimes involve other partners, for example the police.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Work towards a more integrated approach on prevention and promoting healthy relationships is needed. The council should lead the way in producing relevant and useful resources for primary and secondary, with primary schools encouraged to teach sex and health relationships in the final years, including consent.**
- 2. Develop Southwark Relationship Education (RE) and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum resources, making sure that these emphasise developing relationship skills and emotional literacy, and are appropriate to the ethos of different schools, and the needs and ages of different children. These ought to be high quality, electronic, flexible resources with clearly defined permissions that schools can use to create their own lesson plans - with an emphasis on images and short videos. Input ought to be sought from young people (e.g. Southwark Young advisors) in their development to ensure that they reflect the concerns of today's young people.**
- 3. Develop a resource list of quality external providers (SHER, Tender etc.) and consider commissioning these.**
- 4. Schools ought to be encouraged and enabled to provide support to parents and carers to help their children to develop healthy relationships.**

## **9. Safeguarding and monitoring incidents of sexual assault and harassment**

9.1. Each school has to have a safeguarding policy in place and this includes referring to the council multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and the police as appropriate. Most schools use the Southwark model policy.

9.2. The council does not undertake systematic recording of incidents. Officers said Ofsted will look to see if schools are making appropriate action on safeguarding issues. Generally they thought schools were working well, however they were concerned about a couple of schools becoming closed off; good working relationships are important.

9.3. There is a variety of safeguarding procedures-specific procedures in place in schools for dealing with different types of abuse. A survey was sent out to all secondary schools in Southwark to find out about how the council can best support them in their teaching of PHSE responses included:

- Safeguarding procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy. Students are taught about healthy relationship, domestic violence (in all its forms) healthy use of social media and how to respond to concerns/bullying.
- We have a Sharp system for students to log online abuse 24/7. We have a robust safeguarding practice with 13 trained DSLs / DDSLs. Comprehensive pastoral team available to meet students' needs throughout the school day. Collaborative work with the Safer Schools Police Officer. We update our safeguarding policy each year. We also provide in-house training for staff through CPD.
- Yes we have an anti bullying policy and we have a no mobile phone policy so we also do not have a lot of social media things to investigate we recommend parents to go to the police.
- Anti-bullying policy, regular PSHE, outside agencies e.g. police did work on social media.

## **10. Sexual harassment and consent**

10.1. According to a 2018 report by Plan every day, girls across the UK are being harassed in public places. UK girls are facing verbal and physical harassment every day – and they want it to stop. The latest survey shows that 66% of girls aged 14 to 21 have experienced unwanted sexual attention or harassment in a public place. Every month, 38% are experiencing verbal harassment like cat-calling, wolf whistling and sexual comments, while 15% are being touched, groped or grabbed. Despite this harassment happening in public, only 20% of girls said someone had responded in a way they found helpful. To stay safe, girls are having to take steps to avoid being targeted: from not going out at night to dressing differently and taking longer routes to avoid dangerous locations.

10.2. Domestic Abuse is well recorded and officers are satisfied that the data on this is reliable, however for other criminal and harmful practices, such as sexual harassment, the data is more patchy.

10.3. Neither the council nor the police were tracking this information. Inadequate data collection of sexual harassment and assault is a national problem. The select committee report on Sexual harassment and Sexual Violence in Schools recommended that schools should use a standardised reporting and recording system for incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence and that their report should be published annually alongside other crime statistics.

10.4. The police provided the following information on sexual harassment/ assaults in schools. From 1st September 2018 there were 14 reported incidences on school premises:

- 3 of them are inappropriate sexual touching between children under 10
- 4 are allegations against teachers by pupils (2 are ongoing investigations)
- 1 is an allegation between teachers.

- 4 are teenage girls alleging against similar age boys and involve sexual touching to varying degrees.
- 1 relates to sexual touching between parties aged 10 in primary school.
- 1 relates to allegation of video of teen female and younger male sexual touching.

Police officers work in every school in secondary and are looking at extending this to primary schools (year 6 and 7). Brixton Police Station is now the safeguarding hub for Southwark and Lambeth.

10.5. Through the roundtable discussions it has become apparent that harassment is common place both inside and outside the school gates. Street harassment is an issue with young women reporting grown men whistling and also groups /gangs of older boys, some of whom are acquaintances, making comments, and sometimes reacting in a hostile manner when these are not welcomed. Students said that there are girls who are vulnerable to this kind of sexualized attention, which they seemed to view as predatory. Some girls said they always walked home with friends for mutual support and protection, while others said they only did this for company.

10.6. At the Salmon centre some young people (girls) had no clear understanding of what sexual harassment was but people felt that it means what you don't want to happen and said it has to be repeated to be harassment. They all thought that someone pinching your bra strap was not harassment. Many of the girls felt boys had a different understanding of what consent is. The girls said that you had to explicitly say yes for it to be consent whereas boys feel only if girls say no it is not consent. Many girls were not sure where to go for support or help.

10.7. In terms of reporting they said probably the police but they didn't think they would be believed. Girls feel ashamed about what has happened to them and felt that the police wouldn't believe them. In fact there were some really negative perceptions of the police. Many said they would not know where or how to report it in school. One girl did have a counsellor in school but said she was never free. The others said there was a counsellor but the service had been cut. They would have all felt more comfortable having trained peers they could go to to report harassment and discuss it.

10.8. Teachers in the questionnaire concluded that parents and carers need to be educated so that they can convey the same messages to their children and it was important that children know who to talk to if they are concerned and that it is acted upon. They also thought that building confidence and self-esteem, educating young people to respect each other on how to deal with issues is important and better collaborative work with the Safer School's Police Officers. Underpinning this is the need for continued training and support for schools with external providers and best practice shared.

## 11 Social **media**

11.1 Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, facilitated through technology like computers, tablets, mobile phones and other internet-enabled devices (Department for Education, 2018; Department of Health, 2017; Scottish Government, 2014; Welsh Assembly Government, 2018).

It can happen anywhere online that allows digital communication, such as:

- social networks
- text messages and messaging apps
- email and private messaging
- online chats
- comments on live streaming sites
- voice chat in games.

- Children and young people can be revictimised (experience further abuse) when abusive content is recorded, uploaded or shared by others online. This can happen if the original abuse happened online or offline.<sup>4</sup>

There was much concern about the rise in sexual violence / harassment online and how to combat this. It was suggested that better controls and restrictions are needed on the content of music videos and video games. There need to be more positive role models in the media for example a campaign through social media where young people are taught what is acceptable and not, and what to do if they are abused.

11.2 Students confirmed that sexual harassment did happen online and it was easy to target young people. Boys sharing unauthorized photos of girls on snapchat or Instagram is a big problem. These images are shared in school, amongst peers. Sometimes the images are obtained without the girls' permission, at parties, for example. They said the sharing is amongst largely, though not exclusively, other boys and is perceived as a way of boys getting one over the girls, and boasting to raise their status. The girls noted the sexist asymmetry here and only girls are sexually shamed. The students said that this sharing of images can be deeply traumatizing, with girls not coming into school because they are so upset and humiliated. One boy said social media bullying had led to a death. Some schools take action against perpetrators; others limit use of phones or ban them and refer parents to the police. The students want more victim support for girls targeted.

11.3. Guidance from the NSPCC suggests that in order to prevent child abuse online it is essential that those who work with children and young people help them:

- learn about the risks associated with online activities
- develop the awareness and skills needed to keep safe online
- learn about healthy relationships, abuse and consent from a young age
- know where to go for help – and recognise that they can help themselves too
- know how to report unacceptable activity or behaviour

(UNICEF, 2011; Hamilton-Giachritsis et al, 2017).

All organisations that work with children should have written policies and procedures that set out how they intend to promote online safety.

### **Recommendations**

- 5. The Police and Southwark Council should work closely with schools, via the headteachers' networks and other forums, in order to get a better picture of what is going on in schools and to share information. Agreement ought to be sought on how to consistently report data on sexual harassment and assault so this can be monitored for trends. The model safeguarding policy ought to be updated to enable this, alongside the provision of guidance and training, network events and inset days aimed at Maintained schools, Trusts, and Academies – as appropriate.**
- 6. Run an awareness campaign on harassment, how to identify it, had how to address it. This should include a specific schools focused campaign with consistent messages and education on what constitutes sexual harassment and consent. One approach could be a week long campaign every year (in November to coincide with 14 days of action on VAWG).**
- 7. Create specific guidelines and recommendations to address online abuse, in school and outside of school, and run a public awareness campaign of what is acceptable.**

## 12. Women's Safety Charter

12.1. The Women's Safety Charter (WSC) was established in 2015 following large scale consultation with the public, council and partner officers, elected members and licensees to understand what can be done to keep women safe from harassment on a night out. Sexual harassment in bars and night clubs is seen as normalised behaviour and goes unchallenged and unreported. The charter is based on a number of key principles which ensure that all staff working at licensed premises act in a responsible and supportive manner, taking all reports seriously. The intention was that the WSC would send out a clear message that female harassment in these premises will not be tolerated. A map of all the premises has been provided along with an extensive list of the range of premises that have signed up to the charter. 156 venues have signed up to the charter.

12.2. Following this review we would recommend officers to carry out an assessment of the impact of the WSC. This could be by a follow up survey of women and premises who signed up to the charter, for example. This follow up would also be an opportunity to bring the charter to the attention of premises once again, as the original staff who signed it may have moved on. A map of all the premises has been provided along with an extensive list of the range of premises that have signed up to the charter. It would also be worth evaluating other initiatives such as 'Ask Angela' and MOPAC's night safety charter to find out the impact they have had and how we can build upon the WSC if necessary.

### Recommendations

- 8. Conduct an impact assessment of the women's safety charter to understand how effective it has been.**
- 9. Require signing up to the charter as a licencing condition.**
- 10. Make it compulsory for all licensed premises to address sexual harassment by putting in place policies and training**
- 11. Ensure the VAWG strategy includes tackling sexual harassment in public places.**
- 12. A councillor ought to be appointed to lead on VAWG**